



May 6, 2014

From: Michigan Farmers Market Association - Amanda Shreve, Manager of Programs and Partnerships; Donna McClurkan, Policy Committee Chair; Dru Montri, Director

To: Representative Hugh Crawford, Representative Andy Schor, and members of the Michigan House of Representatives Regulatory Reform Committee

CC: Representative Marcia Hovey-Wright

RE: **HB 5426 and HB 5427 - Expanding the scope of farmers market permits to include micro brewers**

Thank you, Chairman Crawford, and committee members for accepting testimony on House Bills 5426 and 5427 and considering our support of this legislation. The Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) is a statewide, member-based association located in East Lansing, Michigan. Our mission is to advance farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products. We have been in existence since 2006 and work to support and represent Michigan farmers markets as well as the farmers and small businesses that vend at the more than 300 farmers markets across the state.

MIFMA supports policy initiatives within the State of Michigan that advance and improve farmers markets. As stated in our 2014 Policy Priorities (see attached), we advocate for policies that increase the awareness and consumption of value-added products that highlight Michigan's diverse agricultural industry. This includes expanding the scope of farmers market permits that currently allow qualified small wine makers under Public Act 100 to also include micro brewers under House Bill 5426 and House Bill 5427.

Many of Michigan's micro brewers use hops and grains grown here in Michigan thus supporting Michigan farmers and our state's agricultural industry. We believe that farmers market access will provide growth opportunities for aspiring, micro brewers just as they do for other food entrepreneurs. Connecting small producers which includes micro brewers directly with consumers at farmers markets promotes our rich agricultural heritage and contributes to our burgeoning agri-tourism industry. Overall, we are supportive of this legislation because it will expand opportunities for direct market businesses and contribute to building a vibrant farmers market industry.

We would also like to share with you a list of farmers markets that are unable to have a presence here today, but have asked us to share their support: Fowlerville Farmers Market, Market Manager Nadia Freeman; Leelanau Farmers Market Association, Market Coordinator David McDonald; Farmington Farmers & Artisans Market, General Manager Walt Gajewski; Buchanan Farmers' Market, Downtown Development Authority Director Debra Davino Patzer, Downtown Gaylord Farmers Market, Gaylord Downtown Development Authority Executive Director Justin Burchett; Downtown Saginaw Farmers' Market, Board President Julia Darnton; Frankenmuth Farmers Market, Marketing Manager Dietrich Bronner; and Imlay City Farmers Market, Imlay City Downtown Development Director Kim Marrone.

Again, MIFMA supports HB 5426 and 5427 as this legislation is in alignment with our mission to advance farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products.

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2014 Policy Priorities

The Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) is a statewide, member-based association with a mission to advance farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products. To accomplish this mission, we work in five areas including policy advocacy. MIFMA supports and advocates for policies at the federal, state and local levels that expand opportunities for direct market farmers and businesses, support the farmers market industry, contribute to vibrant communities, and sustain the environment.

This document outlines MIFMA's policy priorities for 2014. The policy priority goals identified support our mission and the objectives are integral to our strategic plan.

Goal:

Support policy initiatives within the State of Michigan that advance and improve farmers markets.

Objectives:

- * To advocate for investments that build the capacity of Michigan farmers' markets as stated in the 2013 Policy Recommendations by the Michigan Food Policy Council.
- * To encourage local entities to fund marketing initiatives, infrastructure improvements and technology updates that promote and advance farmers markets. For example, HB 4487.
- * To increase the awareness and consumption of value-added products that highlight Michigan's diverse agricultural industry. For example, wine, beer, and spirit sales, including supporting and the implementation of Public Act 100 (wine only).
- * To assist in the ongoing assessment of initiatives that support food entrepreneurs using Michigan grown and produced products.
- * To generate greater awareness of MIFMA's farmers market and farmer-vendor members through advertising and promotion.
- * To provide additional opportunities to help farmers manage risk.
- * To create new opportunities for marketing Michigan grown fruit and vegetables.

Goal:

Support federal initiatives that align with our mission to advance farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products.

Objective:

- * To advocate for maintaining and/or expanding the funding essential to the farmers market community. Examples authorized under the Farm Bill include the Specialty Crop Block Grant

program, the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program and the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program (formerly the FMPP).

Goal:

Support food assistance programs that ensure access to fresh, healthy, local foods available at Michigan farmers markets.

Objectives:

- * To advocate for maintaining and/or expanding federal funding for nutrition assistance programs that can be redeemed at farmers markets. For example, supporting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) referred to as WIC Project FRESH in Michigan, the Senior FMNP referred to as Market FRESH in Michigan, WIC Cash Value Benefits (WIC CVB) and Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (SEBTC).
- * To support federal and state initiatives that increase the capacity of or reduce the barriers for farmers and farmers markets implementing food assistance programs. For example, supporting funding for wireless point of sale devices and projects that pilot new forms of technology.
- * To support programs and collaborate with organizations that work to increase consumers' access to healthy, locally produced foods through farmers markets. For example, supporting Fair Food Network's Double Up Food Bucks and Michigan Nutrition Network's SNAP-ed nutrition education.

Goal:

Establish relationships with other food and farming organizations that are in alignment with our mission to advance farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products.

Objective:

- * To identify and align with organizations with clearly stated policy priorities. For example, the Michigan Good Food Charter, Farmers Market Coalition (FMC) and National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC). At this time, MIFMA participates on the Good Food Charter Steering Committee, established in January 2013; Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan and the Michigan Alliance to Stop Hunger.